तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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ALWAYS EMBRACED BY THE LORD

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

If one saw the personal characteristics and activities of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, one would certainly be convinced that He was the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One can ascertain this by following in the footsteps of the *śāstric* injunctions. This sincere study and appreciation of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is also applicable to His authorized devotees, and it is clearly stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*antya-līlā* 7.11):

kali-kālera dharma — kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana
kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nāhe tāra pravartana

In this Age of Kali, real religious propaganda should induce people to chant the Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra*. This is possible for someone who is especially empowered by Krishna. No one can do this without being especially favored by Krishna. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur comments in this regard in his *Anubhāṣya*, wherein he quotes a verse from the *Nārāyaṇa-saṁhitā*:

dvāparīyair janair viṣṇuḥ pañcarātrais tu kevalaiḥ
kalau tu nāma-mātreṇa pūjyate bhagavān hariḥ

"In Dvāpara-yuga, devotees of Lord Vishnu and Krishna rendered devotional service according to the principles of *Pāñcarātra*. In this Age of Kali, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is worshiped simply by the chanting of His holy names." Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur then comments, "Without being empowered by the direct potency of Lord Krishna to fulfill His desire and without being specifically favored by the Lord, no human being can become the spiritual master of the whole world. He certainly cannot succeed by mental concoction, which is not meant for devotees or religious people. Only an empowered personality can distribute the holy name of the Lord and enjoin all fallen souls to worship Krishna. By distributing the holy name of the Lord, he cleanses the hearts of the most fallen people; therefore he extinguishes the blazing fire of the material world. Not only that, he broadcasts the shining brightness of Krishna's effulgence throughout the world. Such an *ācārya*, or spiritual master, should be considered non-different from Krishna — that is, he should be considered the incarnation of Lord Krishna's potency. Such a personality is *kṛṣṇāliṅgita-vigraha* — that is, he is always embraced by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna. Such a person is above the considerations of the *varṇāśrama* institution. He is the guru, spiritual master, for the entire world, a devotee on the topmost platform, the *mahā-bhāgavata* stage, and a *paramahaṁsa-ṭhākura*, a spiritual form only fit to be addressed as *paramahaṁsa* or *ṭhākura*."

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Nonetheless, there are many people who are just like owls and never open their eyes to see the sunshine. These owlish personalities, who are inferior even to the *māyāvādī sannyāsīs*, cannot see the brilliance of Krishna's favor upon the *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee. They are prepared to criticize the person engaged in distributing the holy name all over the world and following in the footsteps of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who wanted Krishna consciousness preached in every town and city.

— Purport to *Cc. madhya* 25.9.

Cheating a Blacksmith with Inferior Steel

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur
Chapter 86 of Upākhyāne Upadeśa

Upākhyāne Upadeśa *is a collection of short stories with explanations that were commonly used by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. Compiled by Sri Sundarananda Prabhu, a prominent disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, it was first published in 1940.*

There was once a tradesman who considered himself very intelligent. He was very cunning and adept at fooling others. Once by his trickery he managed to get some coconuts. He then wanted a sharp chopper to break them open. Eventually he found a very old and rusty chopper in the corner of his room. Taking it to a blacksmith, he asked him to reshape it and make it first class again. The blacksmith told him that he could forge a very good chopper if good quality steel was given to him. The clever tradesmen decided to trick the blacksmith. He told him, "I am a steel merchant and I have some excellent quality steel in my stock. Could you forge a chopper for me using that steel? After making the chopper you can keep whatever extra steel is left over for your labor charge. I assure you that nowhere in India can you find such excellent steel like I will send you. It is very costly."

After speaking in such a flowery and deceitful way, the tradesmen sent a condemned third-class sheet of iron through his son to the blacksmith. Just glancing at the piece of iron the blacksmith realized that it was not steel but only a piece of useless iron. The blacksmith made a chopper out of it and then had it sent to the tradesmen. Finding the chopper to be ineffective and practically useless, the angry tradesman came back to the blacksmith and started threatening and shouting at him. The blacksmith only replied, "By cheating a blacksmith with inferior steel one will only obtain such a chopper."

PURPORT

Those who make any attempt to deceive their spiritual master and the *vaiṣṇavas* in their rendering of devotional service will certainly end up with something spurious. Attempts at deception in the field of devotional service are simply self-deception. They pull one down into the clutches of the illusory energy, without giving any benefit. Persons with ulterior motives think that those who have surrendered everything to the Lord are only deceived, and that those who play double roles of devotional service and simultaneous self-gratification actually gain more.

Attempting such double roles is tantamount to deceiving a blacksmith by supplying him with an inferior quality of iron while asking him to prepare a good quality steel chopper. No one can ever deceive the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is never possible to conquer the domain of the Lord by any sort of deception and quackery. Only one who has candidly surrendered everything unto the lotus feet of the Lord is eligible for achieving all good.

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The Most Severe Offense

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

There are different types of offenses such as: *nāma-aparādha*, *sevā-aparādha*, *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, etc. *Nāma-aparādha* is very serious, and especially *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is the most severe. There are ten types of *nāma-aparādha* and thirty-two types of *sevā-aparādha*. There are also different types of *vaiṣṇava-aparādhas*. To criticize, find fault with, or blaspheme a *vaiṣṇava* are all *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. If someone commits *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* his *bhakti-latā* is uprooted, finished. It is most important that one should not in any way commit *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* because Bhakti-devi will completely disappear. Why does *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* take place? Why should there be criticism, enviousness, or hatred in the society of *vaiṣṇavas*? *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is the most severe *anartha*. Bhakti-devi will disappear and one will never be able to develop *prema-bhakti*. If you

commit *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* it will create a very great obstacle on the path of *prema-bhakti*. *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* generally takes place due to the presence of *īrṣā* and *bhaya*, enviousness and fear. When this *aparādha* is committed, *krodha*, anger, will arise. The offender will become very angry at a particular *vaiṣṇava*. He is afraid of that *vaiṣṇava* because of that *vaiṣṇava's* great power. "He is making rapid advancement and I am not. Most people will be attracted to him and no one will be attracted to me." Due to this envy and fear he finds fault with the *vaiṣṇava*, criticizes him, and speaks ill of him. Hatred and criticism arise and he speaks ill of that *vaiṣṇava* and concocts stories about him. Thus he commits *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*.

We often tell the story of the wolf and the lamb. "Somehow or other give him a bad name and kill him."

A wolf was drinking water from a river at the same time as an innocent lamb. The wolf thought, "Somehow or other I must devour that lamb." The wolf said, "Hey! Don't you know? Can't you see that I am drinking water here? Why are you making the water muddy for me? I shall kill you."

The lamb said, "Oh sir, you are drinking water upstream and I am drinking water downstream. How is it that I am making the water muddy for you?"

"Why did you call me bad names one year ago?"

"Oh sir, I am only three months old. How is it that I called you bad names one year ago?"

"Your mother must have done so. Anyway, I will kill you."

This story of the wolf and the lamb illustrates how hatred, speaking ill, and concocting stories arise from intolerance or enviousness. You may say, "This devotee is not chanting his rounds! He is not following the regulative principles! He has become a *vaiṣṇava*, but now he is engaged in illegal and evil activities! If I remain silent and don't speak about it then I am giving him the opportunity to commit more and more evil activities! I will be indirectly supporting him, just as if I would say, 'Yes, do it!' So in order to do good to him I shall speak to him."

Now if one subtly analyses such things one can understand that you are simply finding fault with that devotee. But are you perfect yourself? Are there no defects in you? The saying is there, a sieve has many holes and a needle has only one hole. The sieve says, "Oh needle, there is a hole in your back." The needle replies, "You have so many holes. I have only one hole." But the sieve criticizes the needle. So, one who criticizes should understand whether he himself is perfect or not. Are there no defects in me?" Only if someone is perfect can he find fault with others.

In the *śāstras* and in the *Bhāgavata* it is said that this *nindā-karaṇa*, criticizing and finding fault with others, is a great *anartha*. Don't do it! It is not your lookout. That is guru's business, it is his lookout. The sages say, "Only see the good in others. Don't see the bad. If you have the nature or tendency to see bad, then see what bad is there in you." This is *āpta-vacana*, authoritative instruction: "If you find something good in some person, then that is what you should accept. Close your eyes to the bad things and open your eyes to the good."

There is one story in this regard. Once a disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Maharaja came to him and spoke ill of another disciple. "Maharaja, Mr. X is doing this thing and that thing." For half an hour he spoke all bad things about that other disciple.

With much patience, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati listened. Then he said, "All right, you have spoken all bad things about him. Is there nothing good in him?"

"Yes, Maharaja. He sings very nice *kīrtana*."

"Then why don't you speak that thing? You spoke all bad of him, but you never said that he sings nice *kīrtana*."

To find fault or criticize some *vaiṣṇava* is not good at all. Doing so you will commit *aparādha* and that is a great *anartha*. Only someone who is perfect can find fault and correct another person. He has the right to be critical because he is perfect and has no defects in himself. If you have some defects, then why are you seeing the faults in others and speaking about it? Thus, the *ācāryas*, *sādhus*, and *śāstras* have forbidden it.

It is not an easy thing to find a person in the material world who is perfect. In the material world there are so many defects. The degree may vary, but defects are there. Those who are *mahāpuruṣas* or *mahātmās* never see defects in anyone. *Paramahaṅsas* or *bhāgavatottamas* never see anything bad. In their vision, everything is related to Krishna. Their vision is a fact because everything and everyone is related to Krishna. *jīvera 'svarūpa' haya, kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa* — the constitutional position of the *jīva* is as an eternal

servant of Krishna. Such an *uttama-bhāgavata* sees, "He is the eternal servant of Krishna." He never sees that the *jīva* is not serving Krishna. He never sees the material world. He sees everything as related to Krishna. "This is Vaikuntha, this is Krishna's world." He sees all good. He never sees any defect. That is his vision. But we are not like that! Such great personalities are very rare. They are not easily available in this world.

A *madhyama-adhikāri* sees these distinctions and defects, but an *uttama-adhikāri* never sees them. An *uttama* who comes to preach, steps down to the *madhyama* stage, otherwise he cannot preach. Without stepping down to the *madhyama* stage he would say, "This person is completely Krishna conscious. He is Krishna's servant, so why shall I preach to him?" He cannot preach. Generally such devotees engage in *nirjana-bhajana.* Although the preacher whose heart bleeds seeing the suffering of the conditioned souls comes down to the *madhyama* stage for preaching, he is not like the general type of *madhyama*. He is still an *uttama-adhikāri.* He sees that the *jīvas* have forgotten Krishna and are devoid of Krishna consciousness. So he goes to preach and he inculcates Krishna consciousness. He brings them to the path of *bhakti* and engages them in Krishna's service by which all of their suffering will be done away with forever.

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To correct and criticize someone is the business of only such a person who is acting as guru. He has the right to inflict punishment on you, to catch hold of your ear and slap you, *guru-karṇa-dhāra.* He will correct you and criticize you, "You rascal, why are you doing this and that?"

Because you have so many defects you have no right to criticize. You are like a sieve. You have so many holes on your back, so why should you criticize a needle who has only one hole? In this way the *śāstras,* the *mahājanas,* and the *sādhus* have condemned this *nindā,* faultfinding and criticism. This is *aparādhotthā-anartha,* the *anartha* born out of *aparādha.* In his commentary on the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam,* Sridhar Swami has mentioned this *nindā*. This *doṣa-kīrtana,* speaking ill of others, is a great *anartha* for the *sādhaka,* the neophyte who has come to the path of *bhajana*, or *sādhana-bhakti.* He should be very, very careful not to commit this *aparādha.*

— From *The Worship of Sri Guru* pages 39-43. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar, Orissa. 2000.

THE LOTUS FEET OF SRI KRISHNA

(śrī rāga)

dhvaja-vajrāṅkusa-paṅkaja-kalitam
vraja-vanitā-kuca-kuṅkuma-lalitam

vande giri-vara-dhara-pada-kamalam
kamalā-kara kamalañchitam amalam

mañjula mani nūpura ramanīyam
acapala-kula ramaṇī kamanīyam

ati lohitam ati rohita bhāṣam
madhu madhupī-kṛta govinda dāsam

1) The lotus feet of Krishna are marked with a flag, a thunderbolt, a rod for controlling an elephant, and a lotus flower, and are embellished with *kuṅkuma* from the breasts of the young girls of Vraja.

2) I offer my humble obeisances to those lotus (*kamala*) feet of the lifter of Govardhan Hill, which are held by the lotus hands of Kamala, Srimati Radharani.

3) His lotus feet are very attractively decorated with ankle bells made of beautiful jewels, and are dressed by beautiful girls who are stunned and afflicted by the beauty of those lotus feet.

4) Because the glow of His lotus feet has entered their minds, their minds seem reddish. His lotus feet are so sweet that they have made the bumblebees servants of Govinda.

— From *Pada-kalpa-taru* compiled by Gokulananda Sen. Syamacharan Library. Calcutta. 438 Gaurabda (1924). Bengali. Unknown author.